



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**EFFECTIVENESS OF 'PENAGA LILIN' (MESUA FERREA L.) AND  
'PAYUNG INDONESIA' (HURA CREPITANS L.) TREES AS THERMAL  
RADIATION FILTERS IN OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT**

**MOHD. FAIRUZ SHAHIDAN.**

**FRSB 2007 3**

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RADIATION FILTERS IN OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT**

**By**

**MOHD FAIRUZ SHAHIDAN**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
In Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

**December 2007**



## DEDICATION

*This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Shahidan bin Mat Doud and Hasidah binti Awang. Thank you for all your love, patience and sacrifice. To my brothers and sisters, thanks for all your support. Finally, Alhamdullillah to Allah S.W.T for this success.*

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fullfilment  
of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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**DECEMBER 2007**

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**Faculty: Design and Architecture**

In tropical climates, outdoor open spaces are highly exposed to solar radiation, resulting in uncomfortable conditions for pedestrians and other users. This influences the outdoor energy budget, leading to consequential thermal effects on the overall urban environment and contributing to the urban heat island effect. However, trees and other vegetation can play a significant role in reducing the effects of thermal heat in open spaces by filtering the incoming solar radiation before it reaches the ground.

This study compares the effectiveness of two types of tree structural forms in filtering the thermal radiation. The trees are *Mesua ferrea L.* and *Hura crepitans L.*, representing roundhead trees and horizontal shape species respectively. This study focuses on three variables that influence on solar radiation filtration, namely, transmissivity, leaf area index and shade form. Two evaluation methods were employed in this study; (i) a field measurement programme using a modified net radiometer and other related instruments, and (ii) Ecotect - a computer-based sun-shading analysis.

Results from this study indicated that both *Mesua ferrea L.* and *Hura crepitans L.* contribute significantly to direct thermal radiation modification below their canopies. The average heat filtration under tree canopy for *Mesua ferrea L.* was found to be 93% with 5% canopy transmissivity, 6.1 of leaf area index, and 35% of shade area. Meanwhile for *Hura crepitans L.* the average heat filtration under canopy was 79% with canopy transmissivity of 22%, leaf area index of 1.5 and 52% of shade area. Therefore, the study found that *Mesua ferrea L.* was better in filtering thermal radiation than *Hura crepitans L.* (93% and 79% respectively). This was attributed to the denser foliage cover and branching habit of *Mesua ferrea L.* with Leaf Area Index of 6.1 and allowing only 5% transmissivity as compared to *Hura crepitans L.* foliage density and branching system with Leaf Area Index of 1.5 and allowing for 22% transmissivity. Finally, the study also found that tree canopy characteristics of both species significantly influence thermal radiation filtration.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**KEBERKESANAN POKOK PENAGA LILIN (*MESUA FERREA L.*) DAN  
PAYUNG INDONESIA (*HURA CREPITANS L.*) SEBAGAI PENYARING  
RADIASI TERMAL DALAM PERSEKITARAN LUARAN**

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Di dalam iklim tropika, kawasan lapang sangat terdedah kepada radiasi solar. Ini menimbulkan rasa kurang selesa kepada pejalan kaki dan pengguna lain. Ini juga memberi pengaruh terhadap keperluan tenaga, dimana ianya mengakibatkan kesan termal kepada keseluruhan persekitaran bandar yang menyumbang kepada kesan kepulauan haba. Dalam konteks ini, pokok dan tumbuhan lain memainkan peranan penting dalam mengurangkan haba termal di kawasan lapang dengan bertindak sebagai penyaring radiasi solar yang memancar ke kawasan lapang sebelum ia tiba ke permukaan tanah.

Kajian ini membandingkan keberkesanan dua jenis bentuk pokok dalam menyaring radiasi thermal. Spesies pokok-pokok tersebut adalah *Mesua ferrea L.* (Penaga Lilin) dan *Hura crepitans L.* (Payung Indonesia) yang mewakili spesies pokok berkanopi bentuk bulat dan berkanopi bentuk rendang. Kajian ini hanya menumpu kepada tiga pembolehubah yang mempengaruhi saringan radiasi solar iaitu kadar ketelusan kanopi, nisbah keluasan daun (NKD) dan bentuk teduhan. Kajian ini menggunakan

dua kaedah penilaian (i) program pengukuran ditapak menggunakan alat *net radiometer* yang diubahsuai dan alatan lain yang berkaitan; dan (ii) Ecotect - perisian komputer bagi analisis teduhan.

Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa kedua-dua pokok *Mesua ferrea L.* dan *Hura crepitans L.* menyumbang penuh terhadap pengubahsuaian radiasi termal di bawah kanopi kedua-dua pokok berkenaan. Secara purata haba yang disaring di bawah kanopi pokok *Mesua ferrea L.* adalah sebanyak 93% dengan 5% kadar ketelusan kanopi, 6.1 nisbah keluasan daun (NKD) dan 35% bagi keluasan teduhan. Manakala bagi *Hura crepitans L.* pula, purata haba yang disaring adalah sebanyak 79% dengan 22% kadar ketelusan kanopi, nisbah keluasan daun (NKD) sebanyak 1.5 dan 52% bagi keluasan teduhan. Oleh demikian, kajian mendapati bahawa kedua-dua pokok *Mesua ferrea L.* dan *Hura crepitans L.* adalah penyaring radiasi termal yang efektif. Walaubagaimanapun, pokok *Mesua ferrea L.* terbukti menjadi penyaring radiasi termal yang lebih baik daripada *Hura crepitans L.* (93% dan 79% masing-masing). Ini adalah disebabkan oleh tabiat keluasan daun, dahan serta ranting pokok *Mesua ferrea L.* yang padat dengan 6.1 nisbah keluasan daun (NKD) dan hanya membenarkan 5% ketelusan kanopi jika dibandingkan sistem kepadatan daun, dahan dan ranting pokok *Hura crepitans L.* iaitu dengan nisbah keluasan daun (NKD) sebanyak 1.5 dan membenarkan 22% ketelusan kanopinya. Akhir sekali, kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa karektor fizikal pokok kedua-dua species pokok ini sangat mempengaruhi penyaringan radiasi termal.

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I certify that an Examination Committee has met on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2007 to conduct the final examination of Mohd Fairuz bin Shahidan on his Master of Science thesis entitled “Effectiveness of 'Penaga Lilin' (*Mesua ferrea* L.) and 'Payung Indonesia' (*Hura crepitans* L.) Trees as Thermal Radiation Filters in Outdoor Environment” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the degree of Master of Science.

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.

  
MOHD FAIRUZ BIN SHAHIDAN  
Date: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>DEDICATION</b>	ii
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	iii
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	v
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	vii
<b>APPROVAL</b>	viii
<b>DECLARATION</b>	x
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	xiii
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	xiv
 <b>CHAPTER</b>	
 <b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	 <b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Problem Statement	3
1.3 Research Question	5
1.4 Research Goal and Objectives	5
1.5 Hypothesis	5
1.6 Operational definition of terminologies	6
1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study	9
1.8 Research Framework	10
1.9 Benefit of Study	12
 <b>2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	 <b>13</b>
2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 Microclimate Modification	13
2.2.1 Definition	13
2.2.2 Microclimate Modification Components	14
2.2.3 Solar Radiation Issues in Malaysia	25
2.3 Tree Canopy Form and Shade	27
2.3.1 Definition	27
2.3.2 Tree Canopy in Tropical Environment	29
2.3.3 Tree Canopy Physical Characteristics	34
2.4 Relationship between Trees and Solar Radiation Filtration	44
2.4.1 Trees Physical Characteristic and Solar Radiation Filtration	44
 <b>3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	 <b>46</b>
3.1 Introduction	46
3.2 Selection of Trees	47
3.2.1 Tree Selection Criteria	48
3.3 Field Measurement	51
3.3.1 Study Location	52
3.3.2 Tree Species Selected	53
3.3.3 Tree Location	54



3.3.4	Pre-testing	55
3.3.5	Sampling Plan	56
3.3.6	Data Collection Instrument	57
3.3.7	Determining times and dates of measurement	63
3.3.8	Measurement Procedure	66
<b>4</b>	<b>RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>79</b>
4.1	Results	79
4.1.1	Plant Selection	79
4.1.2	Thermal Radiation Filtration by Tree Canopy	79
4.1.3	Transmissivity of Tree Canopy	80
4.1.4	Leaf Area Index (LAI)	81
4.1.5	Amount of Shade Cover	81
4.1.6	Comparison between <i>Mesua ferrea</i> L. and <i>Hura crepitans</i>	81
4.1.7	Relationship of Thermal Radiation Filtration and Tree Physical Characteristics	85
4.1.8	The Influence of Transmissivity, Foliage Density and Amount of Shade Cover on Thermal Radiation	87
4.2	Discussion	93
4.2.1	Thermal radiation filtration	93
4.2.2	Transmissivity	95
4.2.3	Leaf Area Index (LAI)	96
4.2.4	Amount of Shade Cover	97
<b>5</b>	<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>98</b>
5.1	Conclusion	98
5.2	Recommendation for Future Research	99
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>101</b>
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>105</b>
	<b>BIODATA OF STUDENT</b>	<b>151</b>
	<b>LIST OF PUBLICATIONS</b>	<b>152</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
2.1 Types of tree architectural model	32
2.2 Example on transmissivity characteristics of selected trees commonly used in the landscape within leafed (summer) and leafless (winter) period	36
2.3 Statistical distribution of leaf area index by biome, for the data set “Global Leaf Area Index Data from Field Measurements, 1932-2000”	39
4.1 Crosstabs Analysis (Kappa) to Measure Level of Agreement in choosing specimen	79
4.2 Descriptive Statistics of radiation filtration and other variables of <i>Mesua ferrea</i> L. and <i>Hura crepitans</i> L species.	80
4.3 Mean Comparison of Thermal Radiation Filtration in Percentage using Independent T-Test	82
4.4 Mean Comparison of Transmissivity in Percentage using Independent T-Test	83
4.5 Mean Comparison of Leaf Area Index (LAI) in Percentage using Independent T-Test	84
4.6 Mean Comparison of Amount of Shade Area in Percentage using Independent T-Test	84
4.7 Correlations analysis result between solar radiation filtration and tree canopy characteristics of <i>Mesua ferrea</i> L. and <i>Hura crepitans</i> L.	86
4.8 Calculated radiation filtration and variables for MF1, MF2, MF3, MF4 and MF5	87
4.9 Regression Analysis Result of <i>Mesua ferrea</i> L.	89
4.10 Calculated radiation filtration and variables for HC1, HC2, HC3, HC4 and HC5	90
4.11 Regression Analysis Result of <i>Hura crepitans</i> L.	92

## LIST OF TABLES IN APPENDIX

F1 Descriptive Statistics on Temperature, Relative Humidity and Air Velocity	149
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## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1.1 Research Framework	11
2.1 The solar (shortwave) radiation received by the earth and terrestrial (longwave) radiation emitted by the earth	17
2.2 Leaf absorption, transmission and reflection	18
2.3 Percentage of single leaf on energy absorption, reflection and transmission	18
2.4 Out of four main microclimate elements, only radiation and wind can be significantly modified by the landscape	23
2.5 Temperature influence by radiation modification	24
2.6 Monthly global radiation and mean temperatures of Kuala Lumpur and Cologne	26
2.7 Four Dominant Tree Shapes	30
2.8 Tree shape can influence the amount of shade cast	41
2.9 The angle of the sun or azimuth	42
3.1 Research Methodology Framework	47
3.2 Types of tree species chosen for plant selection survey	49
3.3 Location of Study Sites	52
3.4 Site plan for <i>Mesua ferrea</i> L. site area	54
3.5 Site plans for <i>Hura crepitans</i> L. site area	55
3.6 Specimen selected for field measurement. <i>Mesua ferrea</i> species (above) and <i>Hura crepitans</i> (below)	56
3.7 (a) Dome net radiometer (type NR2) connected to data logger type DL2e, (b) single-sided sensor by covering the lower half of the sphere with aluminium foil	57
3.8 Photographs showing the positions of dome net radiometer (type NR2) and data logger type DL2 e, (a) under tree canopy (b) under open sky	58

3.9	(a) Lux Meter Lx-101 and (b) taking light measurement in the open	58
3.10	(a) LM-8000 and (b) positioning LM-8000 at chest height and placed beside the tree trunk under tree canopy	59
3.11	Plant Canopy Analyzer Licor LAI-2000	60
3.12	Compass (Type MC-Series)	61
3.13	Pre-testing for tree shadow pattern showed that between 10.00 AM to 3.00 PM was the best shade underneath tree canopies	64
3.14	Simulation from ECOTECT™ version 5.20 software shows that tree shadow patterns between 10.00 AM and 3.00 PM was the best shade underneath tree canopies	65
3.15	Diagram Showing Procedures for Measuring Radiation, Light Intensity and Microclimate	68
3.16	Sectional Diagram Showing Procedures in Measuring Radiation, Light Intensity and Microclimate	68
3.17	Left: Measurement above-canopy (A), Right: Measurement below-canopy (B)	72
3.18	Diagram showing Measurement Procedures for LAI measurement (Plan View)	73
3.19	Diagram showing Measurement Procedures for LAI measurement (Elevation View)	73
3.20	Reconstruction of tree shape silhouette extrusion	74
3.21	The implementation of instrumented photograph in constructing 3D modelling	75
3.22	The implementation of instrumented photograph in constructing 3D modelling	76
3.23	System diagram	77
4.1	Correlation thermal radiation filtration and transmissivity of <i>Mesua ferrea L.</i>	88
4.2	Correlation thermal radiation filtration and LAI of <i>Mesua ferrea L.</i>	89
4.3	Correlation thermal radiation filtration and light filtration of <i>Hura crepitans L.</i>	91



4.4	Correlation thermal radiation filtration and LAI of <i>Hura crepitans</i> L	92
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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Trees are one of the natural elements that have its own special potential that exist to give a significant impact in minimizing environmental conflict such as thermal problems. In concerning plants and the environment, canopy is one major component that can contribute in giving such impact towards microclimatic environment. Shades that form by canopy have their own correlation by their foliage geometry form that react significantly towards microclimate indicators such as solar radiation and wind velocity (Steven *et al.*, 1986). Physical aspects such as form, height, density and branching structure; and leaf covers are the main components that create shade as well as filtration shelter system (Brown and Gillespie, 1995 and Kotzen 2003).

According to Oke (1987), in country such as France, some micro-climatologists have studied the use of vegetation as a form of microclimatic control in outdoor environment. Vegetation such as tree can be planted in four different structures: covering vegetation, isolated trees, groves or lines of trees. Many studies have been performed in the microclimatic performance of these green configurations based on planting design and principles in outdoor surrounding environment (Oke, 1987).

In addition, many studies have been conducted to measure and evaluate on tree design aspect in such a way it can give some extraordinary impact to landscape character as

well as temperature control (Heisler, 1985; Scott *et al.*, 1999; Streiling and Matzarakis, 2003; Rosdi and Ainuddin, 2004; Picot, 2004; and Kotzen, 2003). Tree physical aspect is one major factor that should be considered in giving a good ambient towards microclimatic surrounding. Picot (2004) in his study proved that tree growth could give impact towards users' comfort. It shows that physical aspect of trees may influence the character and the ambient of micro surrounding.

Tree canopy creates shade by its foliage geometry. Crown of tree that was created by branches, leaves and twigs can provide shade and reduce wind speed. The shade cast by trees can reduce glare and block the diffuse light reflected from the sky and surrounding surfaces, thereby altering the heat exchange between the building and its surroundings. During the day, tree shading also reduces heat gain in buildings by reducing the surface temperature of the surroundings (Akbari *et al.*, 2001).

According to Kotzen (2003), the shade indicates a reduction in downward energy flow, particularly of visible light and solar infrared. This shade is created by two elements, namely major and minor branching/limbs as well as leaf covers. The percentage of limbs and leaf cover varies from tree species to tree species, from tree to tree within the species and the density of leaf cover also varies from season to season.

Based on the above statements, we know that the tree canopy physical character can contribute in enhancing microclimate underneath the canopy. The tree that creates shade by its canopy character would give a different quality impact in reducing the surface temperature as well as microclimatic surroundings. However, the value of heat reduction

create by the canopy character should be analysed to enhance the effectiveness of tree as a natural solar radiation filter.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

In tropical climates, outdoor open spaces are highly exposed to solar radiation. This influences the outdoor energy budget, leading to consequential thermal effects on the overall urban environment (Scott, 1999; Akbari, 2001; Scudo, 2002; Streiling, 2002; Picot, 2004). The heat generated can also lead to the formation of heat islands in urban areas (Akbari, 2001). One way of improving urban microclimate is by using shade trees and green structures in minimizing energy use and reducing thermal effects to the overall surrounding (Akbari, 2001; Streiling, 2002).

Tree canopies and vegetation can play a significant role in reducing the effects of heat in open outdoor spaces by filtering the incoming solar radiation before it reaches the ground surface (Brown and Gillespie, 1995). Shades formed by tree canopies have their own correlation to foliage geometry that significantly influences microclimate indicators such as solar radiation and wind velocity (Steven, 1986). Physical aspects such as form, height, density and branching structure, and foliage cover are the main components that create shade as well as filtration shelter system (Brown and Gillespie, 1995; Kotzen, 2003).

According to Brown and Gillespie (1995p. 97), trees can modify microclimatic elements such as wind velocity, relative humidity, solar radiation and terrestrial radiation. However, it is most effective in modifying solar radiation and terrestrial radiation.

Therefore, trees can react towards all microclimate indicators but most of it is through radiation control.

In fact, tree canopy characteristics such branching, twigs and limbs, foliage cover and tree shape are the main components that contribute to the quality of shade, amount of radiation filter, number of temperature changes underneath the canopy and the microclimate ambient influenced by the canopy (Heisler, 1985; Brown and Gillespie, 1995; Akbari, 2001; Streiling, 2002 and Kotzen, 2003).

Trees that have a horizontal spreading canopy or round shaped canopies can give ample shade and moderate temperatures (Darwin and Saufi, 1980, Said *et. al*, 2004). Horizontal shaped canopy with many spreading branches and round shape canopy with thick and overlapping branching provide shade that reduces evaporation from the asphalt or hard surface thereby reducing the radiant heat underneath the canopy (Darwin and Saufi, 1980; Brown and Gillepie, 1995; Scott, 1999 and Kotzen, 2003).

The main research question that needs to be addressed is how effective are trees with spreading horizontal and roundhead canopies function as an effective thermal radiation filters based on their canopy characteristics?

### 1.3 Research Question

This study revolves around the question of whether trees of certain species can become an effective thermal radiation filter and therefore can contribute towards reducing thermal heat in urban areas.

### 1.4 Research Goal and Objectives

The goal of this study is to determine the effectiveness of selected tree species as thermal radiation filters to ameliorate thermal heat in outdoor environment.

To achieve this goal, the following objectives are formulated:

- i) To identify tree species with suitable structural form and physical characteristics that can be effective thermal radiation filters;
- ii) To evaluate and compare thermal radiation and daylight intensity outside and underneath tree canopy of selected species;
- iii) To evaluate and compare leaf area index of selected species;
- iv) To evaluate and compare the influence of canopy form of selected species on the amount of shade provided.

### 1.5 Hypothesis

#### Hypothesis 1

Ho: *Mesua ferrea* L. is not significantly difference from *Hura crepitans* L. as thermal radiation filter

Ha: *Mesua ferrea* L. is significantly different from *Hura crepitans* L. as thermal radiation filter

### Hypothesis 2

Ho: *Mesua ferrea L.* is effective as thermal radiation filter in outdoor environment.

Ha: *Mesua ferrea L.* is not an effective thermal radiation filter in outdoor environment.

### Hypothesis 3

Ho: *Hura crepitans L.* is effective as thermal radiation filter in outdoor environment.

Ha: *Hura crepitans L.* is not an effective thermal radiation filter in outdoor environment.

## **1.6 Operational definition of terminologies**

In this study, there are operational definitions of terminologies to be determined such as:

- i) Microclimate modification can be defined as manipulating or changing the energy of microclimate component by blocking or transmitting or adjusting the partitioning to balance between energy supplied and the energy that need by the consumers. It that can significantly modified through an object elements in landscape in achieving a small outdoor thermally comfortable environment.
- ii) Solar radiation can be defined as radiation from the sun whilst Terrestrial radiation is radiation emitted by objects on earth. Solar radiation consists of variety of wavelengths, from very short ultraviolet wavelengths, visible wavelengths and solar infrared wavelengths.

- iii) Thermal radiation can be defined as electromagnetic radiation emitted from heat or light source as a consequence of its temperature. It consists essentially of ultraviolet, visible and infrared radiations.
- iv) Thermal radiation filtration can be defined as blockage of solar radiation through branches and leaves of a tree by the process of absorption, reflection and transmission in shortwave radiation (consists of infrared, visible light and ultraviolet wavelength) that reduces the energy reaching the ground.
- v) Wind factor is the movement of air from one place to the next. However, this factor is not included and measured in the study.
- vi) Relative humidity is a term used to describe the quantity of water vapour that exists in a gaseous mixture of air and water.
- vii) Temperature is defined as a physical property of a system that underlies the common notions of hot and cold or; a measure of how hot or cold something is.
- viii) Tree canopy is defined according to tree characteristic that is constructed by tree trunk, branches, twigs and limbs that formed the shape of the tree. It also consists of leaves that structured and arranged by combination of branching elements and character. Root structure is not considered in this study.



- ix) Amount of shade cover is defined as the total shadow that is sheltered from the heat and glare of sunlight created by branching or limbs as well as foliage cover from the tree canopy form. It depends on the tree shape according to tree existing character.
- x) Branching is a part of a woody plant such as tree, shrub, or vine. It is any woody structural member that is usually connected to but not part of the central trunk. A large or main branch is sometimes called limb or bough, while very small branches are called branchlets or twigs.
- xi) Transmissivity of plants can be defined as the light that is being transmitted after it has been blocked, absorbed and reflected by canopy structure due to the density of branching, twigs and foliage covers character. It can be determined by percentage value (Brown and Gillespie, 1995).
- xii) Leaf cover or foliage cover can be defined as the fraction of the ground covered by foliage density. Foliage density can be defined as the amount of leaf in a tree canopy.
- xiii) Leaf Area Index (LAI) is index value in estimating leaf density by measuring leaf area per unit ground area. It determines the foliage density of a tree.
- xiv) Crown form can be defined as the form of tree that made up and influence by branch, twigs and leaf features formation. It forms an individual